



Esprit de Corps

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What are Mason County Literacy AmeriCorps members up to?

By Whitney Harding and Calen Swift, Washington Service Corps Individual Placement members, Shelton

Shelton, a small town nestled between hills and an inlet at the base of Puget Sound, is home to Mason County Literacy (MCL), a non-profit volunteer-based organization. MCL has been providing a wide variety of educational opportunities to adult learners and their families for almost 20 years, most notably classes in GED preparation, basic skills, and English as a Second Language (ESL). This year's AmeriCorps members at MCL, Whitney Harding and Calen Swift, are bringing their skills and passion to these programs. They recruit and support volunteer tutors, and plan and teach creative, high quality classes each week. Calen teaches GED class and tutors individuals in reading, writing, social

studies and science in effort to help them pass their GED and obtain the equivalent of a high school diploma. She and Whitney also teach in the ESL Program.

The adult ESL classes and the Children's Program that accompany them together provide a vital service for families who are immigrants in the Shelton community. The ESL adult program serves immigrants primarily from Guatemala and Mexico who work in industries ranging from shellfish harvesting, brush picking, and landscaping to housekeeping and restaurant work.

The Children's Program provides children of parents in the adult program a place where families can learn together. The program serves children ages 4-12, encouraging a love of learning, in addition to facilitating opportunities for children to learn about themselves and the world --all while having a good time! AmeriCorps member Whitney Harding coordinates the program, creating curriculum customized to the children's interests. She also mentors high school volunteers who help provide a nurturing environment in the class.

MCL's unique learner-centered program provides students with curriculum that is relevant to their daily lives and immediately useful. Community volunteers

help to create a comfortable, small group environment within the class that allows each student ample opportunities for practice at an appropriate level. AmeriCorps member Calen Swift develops curriculum for the adult classes around the themes that students determine most important. They learn reading, writing, grammar and conversation skills to help with basic societal skills like navigating the workplace, going to the doctor, and banking. Calen also works closely with the volunteer tutors and supports their effectiveness in the class.

FAMILY PROFILE: Clients Jose and Lucia are a couple who attended classes regularly at Mason County Literacy and reports that they're able to communicate effectively at work, at their children's school, and at the clinic. They can now fill out job applications, ask questions of teachers, make appointments at the doctor, and describe basic symptoms. Lucia is an able learner at beginner level who takes a leadership role in the class and shares her kindness, humor and knowledge with everyone. Her husband Jose is an advanced beginner who speaks and understands English at a basic level, and is focused on improving his writing skills.

880 Vaccinated at Burlington-Edison Mass Clinic with help of Skagit County MRC

By Omar Tanamly, Skagit County MRC, Mount Vernon

Members of the Skagit County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) began arriving for the H1N1 mass clinic at 7 am Saturday, December 11th. The clinic was held at Burlington-Edison High School in the school cafeteria. As people walked through the main doors, they were met by the first of five stations: the greeter's station. Here, Health Department staff and MRC volunteers were on hand all day to welcome the public, hand out the necessary forms, and answer questions about the flu and the two forms of vaccine that were available (nasal and injectable).

Down the hall, the second station consisted of six long tables where the public could sit and fill out their forms. A team of educators, including Spanish-speaking translators, were available to assist

anyone who had questions or needed extra help. Next was the reviewing station, where staff reviewed the forms for accuracy and obtained relevant insurance information. Ushers then helped direct people to a waiting area where they sat until being called up to one of nine vaccination stations, each consisting of a wooden table with two nurses.

After receiving their vaccine, people were directed to the exit, which was at the opposite end of the cafeteria. There, they could stop at the post-education station, where MRC volunteers stood and handed out brochures and informational sheets on the flu and other health issues.

There were 25 MRC volunteers on site throughout the day who served in a variety of positions. Building on the strong MRC presence throughout the H1N1 season, these volunteers worked as timekeepers, greeters,

educators, translators, ushers, vaccinators, security personnel, and post-education workers.

By the end of the day, a total of 880 vaccines had been given over a six-hour period, at the rate of about 147 vaccines per hour. "I think we could have done 3 times that amount," said Health Department Director, Peter Browning. It is clear that without the help of the Medical Reserve Corps, the mass clinic would not have been nearly as efficient, coherent, or effective. Many members of the public commented on the fluidity of the process and the pleasant atmosphere provided by staff and volunteers alike. After nearly two months of helping with flu clinics at the Skagit County Health Department, the MRC volunteers helped make this culminating mass clinic a great success.

City of Hoquiam AmeriCorps in action on Martin Luther King Day

By Tracy Wood, City of Hoquiam AmeriCorps Project Supervisor, Hoquiam

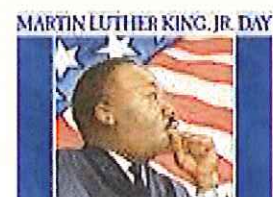
AmeriCorps members with the City of Hoquiam recently combined efforts with the Quinalt Conservation Corps team to revitalize and rehabilitate a nature park located in the middle of the. Due to the massive storms we have had over the past few years, the park and its trails had become unusable. With the efforts of the conservation corps and some great plans and advertising, the volunteer group held a day-long event to clear debris from the trails, repair damage to the walking bridges, spread gravel and remove debris and ivy from the area.

Our AmeriCorps members, the City of Hoquiam Supervisor, five members of the Quinalt Conservation Corps, their supervisor and twenty-seven volunteers from throughout Hoquiam spent the entire day rehabilitating this park so citizens and visitors could enjoy its natural beauty. Over three miles of trail received new gravel.

Two walking bridges were built on site as well as the installation of stairs in steep portions of the trail. Future plans include the installation of a kiosk with trail information as well as interpretive signing along the trails.

The City of Hoquiam funded the project, as well as local businesses contributing materials and food to keep the large volunteer group happy. At the end of the long day, the park is again a highlight of our area.

We are happy to have been able to combine efforts on such a worthwhile project and to now have a great source of friendship (and hard working volunteers) in the conservation corps to combine efforts on future projects. It was a very successful project and well supported by Hoquiam's citizens.



A Day in the Life of an AmeriCorps VISTA at her Office of Emergency Management

By Janeen Olson, AmeriCorps VISTA member, Burlington

When Jennifer put the call out for newsletter articles, I agreed to put my "pen to paper" and come up with a few words about what a typical day is like in the City of Redmond Office of Emergency Management (OEM). I am sure my fellow VISTA members now realize that acronyms fly around like TINT (There is No Tomorrow). Okay, I made that one up but who knew DWCPE would become double-walled corrugated polyethylene pipe without an acronyms dictionary? Hey, I came from a medical field where IV's and SOPs are common language as well but really....DWCPE?! All I can say is SOS!

I feel very fortunate that I was accepted into the fold not as a "temporary VISTA person" but as a valuable team member ready to take on assignments that were gaps waiting to be bridged with OEM and other departments and service providers in the City of Redmond. One such gap was developing relationships with the faith-based communities to partner with the City of Redmond to

safeguard and provide aide in crisis and disaster situations.

Fellow VISTA members Lyz Stamen and Laura Schletzbaum, had assisted me by introducing me to Pierce County's Emergency Management Specialist Daucie Wilson and the work she had accomplished with her faith-based sheltering program. Daucie generously supplied us with a plethora of information, including a complete DVD of her PowerPoint presentations, brochures and textbooks. We left rich with ideas on how to begin our own projects.

I began compiling a database of all the faith-based organizations within Redmond city limits. Thirty-four is the count I ended with and sent out a save-the-date email inviting them to my "Partners in Response Summit". I followed the email with a personal letter from the Mayor and a printed flyer of the agenda snail-mailed to all of the lead clergy. The big day came and fifteen different organizations represented at our summit. In the coming months, I will continue to

develop relationships with our new partners and begin training their staff and congregation volunteers in shelter operations and personal preparedness.

Accomplishment is a good feeling and I hope you all have a chance to BAGAMAD (Bridge a Gap and Make a Difference)!



Left to right: AmeriCorps Debbie Newman and Janeen Olson ready to assist with pride!

Reflection of an AmeriCorps member

By Megan MacCrellish,, Previous AmeriCorps member, Seattle

Greetings from an AmeriCorps alum! It has been five months since my AmeriCorps term ended, and I am still so proud of my time served through the Washington Service Corps. I loved my AmeriCorps term and learned so much at the CWB (Center for Wooden Boats.)

After my AmeriCorps term ended, I found a job to pursue an interest sparked from service at the CWB. I decided to pursue events planning

and fundraising for non-profit organizations that make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children. I am working as the Development Coordinator at Amara, a Seattle non-profit that specializes in finding forever homes for children in foster care. I found my new position within two weeks after my last day of service! I feel so lucky - not only to have a job, but to have a job that I find meaningful.

I believe my AmeriCorps term signaled very positive messages to my potential employers. The message being that I am an active and engaged citizen and

that I have experience in working with a team. I have been at Amara for almost five months now and I truly believe in the organization and its mission. Thank you Washington Service Corps and AmeriCorps!



Federal Way Public Schools - Martin Luther King project

By Danielle Bonner, Federal Way Public Schools Project Supervisor, Federal Way

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and message were honored by two recent service projects sponsored by the Federal Way Public Schools AmeriCorps Team. In January, 76 AmeriCorps members divided into three teams to begin these successful projects. The following describes the projects:

A team of 20 AmeriCorps members partnered with the Federal Way Parks Department to do a service project at Dumas Bay, a retreat center located in Federal Way. The public has not had access to the Puget Sound beach from Dumas Bay for over four years due to the unsafe conditions of the stairs providing access to Puget Sound. This team spent all day in the rain doing the necessary prep work needed to rebuild the stairs that led down to the beach. This prep work included moving gravel, rocks, sand, and beauty bark across this 12-acre park. In appreciation for the Ameri-

Corps members' service, the City of Federal Way provided home-made lasagna for lunch.

Simultaneously, 56 AmeriCorps members partnered with The City of Federal Way and the Federal Way Diversity commission to do a food drive. Members stood outside grocery stores in three-hour shifts talking to community members and asking for donations. Proceeds from the food drive went to The Multi-Service Center and The Federal Way Senior Center. Members then spent time in the warehouse separating food and clothing. The City of Federal Way provided lunch for all volunteers that participated in this service project. When all was said and done and in the pouring rain, members were able to get 2000 pounds of food and approximately \$350 in cash!

Several days later, AmeriCorps members returned to Dumas Bay for the completion of the service project. Members continued to prune bushes, pressure wash sidewalks, and move

gravel, rocks, sand, and beauty bark. In total, the Federal Way Public Schools AmeriCorps team and recruited volunteers put in 740 hours worth of service, set 3900 pounds of catch basin lids for stairs, installed 100 treads, installed 25 railing posts, moved 51,500 pounds of gravel, 33,740 pounds of sand, and 32,140 pounds of rocks. Members additionally pruned approximately 90 yards of green waste and spread 65 yards of bark.



Federal Way AmeriCorps members hard at work at their Dumas Bay service project.

VISTA leader participates in MLK Day

By Jennifer Burns, AmeriCorps VISTA Leader, Olympia

After gathering all my Washington winter gear in preparation for my MLK day project, I was very glad to see that January 18 was a sunny day in Auburn. I arrived at Les Gove Park to find that other dedicated volunteers had beaten me to the massive pile of sand that occupies a corner of the park's parking lot. I only briefly said hello to my fellow VISTA members before being put right to work.

I had volunteered to spend the MLK day helping with an ongoing sandbag project coordinated by AmeriCorps member Riley Relfe, serving with City of Auburn. I had never really even seen sandbags but with the Howard Hansen Dam situation still a threat, many residents in Auburn had requested sandbags to help protect their property. My aching back and multiple blisters could attest to the first hand knowledge I gained about sandbags that day.

After several hours filling and moving sandbags, we ended the day having delivered over 200 sandbags and filling another 500. That's over 24,850 pounds of sand ready to protect Auburn properties. That's merely a drop in the bucket compared to the 80,000 sandbags that have been filled and delivered since September.

Being a VISTA member, it was nice to get out of my office and see a different side of service that reinforces what AmeriCorps is all about; helping the communities where they need help the most!



VISTA Leader Jennifer Burns dedicating her time to MLK day of service.

MLK project—King County Housing Authority

By Kelsey Krumdieck, Washington Service Corps member, Seattle

On January 15th my AmeriCorps team came out to my site, WestSide Baby, to help with the arduous task of inventory. WestSide Baby is a non-profit organization that collects both new and used items for children and babies. These items are then sorted, checked for quality and safety, and then distributed free of charge to South King County families in need via local social service agencies that assist low-income families. These agencies place orders for the families they serve, and volunteers at WestSide Baby fill those orders with items that are available. In 2009, WestSide Baby served over 15,000 children.

Inventory is a particularly difficult task at WestSide Baby because items are constantly moving through the facility; an item could come in on a Monday and it will be out the door by Wednesday. So in order to take an

accurate inventory it is necessary to do it on a day that WestSide Baby is closed for both donations and order filling. With the thousands of diapers, clothes, toys and equipment on site this can be a nearly impossible task without outside help. "WestSide Baby has been so fortunate to have the enthusiastic and detail-oriented help of an AmeriCorps Team," shares Executive Director Nancy Woodland. "Last year \$1.25 million in essential things for kids passed through our doors. When we conduct inventory, we can evaluate our efficiency to make sure we are using every square inch for actively moving items and we can use it for tax filings. Before AmeriCorps, our Board members and small staff were here counting every bottle, onesie and diaper. Thanks to the work of the team, the Staff can continue operations without closing for the week and we can also release our Board to devote time to more long-term planning, fundraising or committee work."

For me, having my team come out to my site and help complete inventory was wonderful. It meant that my coworkers and I could use the time saved to focus on the important things that WestSide Baby does - making it possible to meet the basic needs of babies and children in our community.



Left to right - AmeriCorps Members Jenni Whitney, Amanda Rudderman, Nicola Crawford and Whitney Hunt serving at West Side Baby.

Tragedy Brings Support and Compassion

By Julie O'Neal, New Alliance Counseling Services Project Supervisor, Republic

A few days before Christmas 2009, a fire in an apartment building devastated the small community of Curlew, Washington (population 1,165), leaving three dead and three others badly injured and homeless. When the AmeriCorps members arrived on the scene, they witnessed the disbelief on people's faces, the sadness of those who lost family and their belongings, and the place they called home.

The AmeriCorps members also witnessed the compassion and support of this small community. In these hard times, with the

unemployment rate so high and many families facing financial difficulties, the outpouring of support from the community was overwhelming.

AmeriCorps members were put in charge of sorting out all the non-food donations. For hours the members sorted clothes, shoes, bedding, kitchen items and toys. The AmeriCorps members even wrapped Christmas presents for the children and additionally assisted those who came in to pick up items. On our drive home members made statements reflecting on their service: "Wow I can't believe how many people showed up to donate things", "I feel as if I made a big difference", "It made me feel good

to help" and "I am pleased that I got to take part in helping today."

Participants stated that the energy was high and lessons were relevant and rewarding.



AmeriCorps members Amanda Lockhart, Travis Wellman and Grace Freshman helping an individual during hard times.

Habitat for Humanity East King County participates in MLK Day

By Elise Cope, Habitat for Humanity Project Supervisor, Redmond

AmeriCorps successfully completed their MLK Day project. The event took place at Nature's Last Stand in Fall City, Washington and was an all-day event.

The AmeriCorps team cut and raised some supporting posts for a shed, landscaped around three large green

houses and helped prepare the farm grounds for potential flooding. In addition to AmeriCorps, two of our beloved site regulars were there as well as about 15 other volunteers.

Farmer Jon and Anna seemed very thankful at the end of the day. AmeriCorps members later returned to help finish the shed.



AmeriCorps members hard at work in honor of MLK Day!



Veterans AmeriCorps Team celebrates Martin Luther King Day

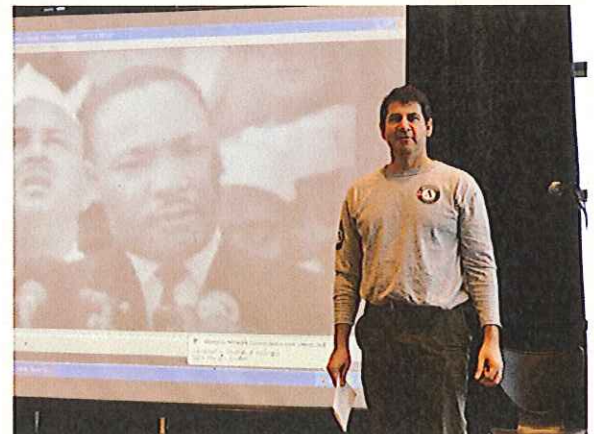
By George Cavallo, Veteran AmeriCorps member, Bothell

Juanita Woodlands and Blythe Park got a makeover recently as 200 volunteers, including staff, students and faculty at Cascadia and University of Washington Bothell, planted 500 seedlings and removed yards of blackberry brambles.

They also visited three senior centers in Bothell, assisted a foster care home with yard and house chores, donated 200 food items to Greater Bothell Parent Resource Center, decorated 100 additional food bags, wrote messages in 75 cards for Children's Hospital, and did prep work for the mural that will be completed at Maywood Hills Elementary by Cascadia art students later this quarter. Also, on the day of the MLK holiday, 20 people gathered to participate in dialogue with Bothell Mayor Lamb and attend the march through downtown Bothell.



AmeriCorps members George Cavallo and Kate Estefani participating in MLK Day.



AmeriCorps member George Cavallo presenting the Martin Luther King speech.

Celebrate Volunteer Week with the Mariners in Seattle!!

The Seattle Mariners and the Washington Commission for National & Community Service would like to cordially invite you to the volunteer week celebration of the year! Please join us at this special night to honor volunteers!

Salute to Volunteers Night is the perfect way to recognize your community volunteers' efforts or hold a team-building event for your organization.

We look forward to seeing you at Safeco Field for Salute to Volunteers Night on April 20.

- DEADLINE TO PURCHASE TICKETS: Monday, April 19 at NOON
- Game Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2010 - 7:10 p.m.
- \$8 View Reserved (normally \$20)
- \$25 Field Level Seating (normally \$40)



There will be a link available soon to purchase tickets online at this website: <http://seattle.mariners.mlb.com/sea/ticketing/volunteers.jsp>

Washington Service Corps Web site updates!

By Eric Kindvall, Washington Service Corps, Director of Operations and Programs, Lacey

Since the launch of our new Web site the Washington Service Corps has received some fantastic and constructive input from users. We continue to make changes and updates to our site with regard to use, feedback and growth.

As we progress into the future with our Web site, changes will be ongoing. One of these will be implementing a name change to our current web address. The new Web site name is www.esd.wa.gov/washingtonservicecorps. This will support easier access by the public as well as meet our marketing and recruiting needs.

Through the public site members, supervisors and partners can access forms, evaluation tools and reference material by clicking on the orange 'already a member?' or 'already a project or site supervisor?' links located on the left hand side of the home page. You can also bookmark www.esd.wa.gov/washingtonservicecorps/membersandpartners for easy access and future use.

Between now and then you may notice some broken links or errors when navigating through our Web site or search engines. Broken links and errors occur when hyperlinks point to a web page or document that is temporarily unavailable. This may occur as we are moving the information under the current web address over to the new web address. We are sorry for the inconvenience, but please know this will be temporary and we thank you for your patience. In advance we will try to make this update to the name change a seamless progression.

As a reminder, when the new Web site is completed you may want to bookmark it so that you can access it easily. You will also need to re-bookmark pages you may have marked for use or reference in the past.

Upcoming Important Dates and Events

National Volunteer Week
April 18-24

Seattle Mariners Salute to Volunteers Night
April 20

National AmeriCorps Week
May 8-15

Supervisor Training and Technical Assistance
Meeting
May 18-20



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